

CLEAN VERSION OF ENTIRE SET OF PENDING CLAIMS
SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH 37 CFR 1.121(c)(3)
IN RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION OF JULY 30, 2002

CLAIMS

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1. (Three Times Amended) An absorbent article having a longitudinal center line and a lateral centerline, an inner surface and a garment facing surface, comprising:

- (a) a containment assembly having a rear waist region, a crotch region, a front waist region, a pair of longitudinal edges, a body facing surface and a garment facing surface opposite to the body facing surface, the containment assembly comprising a topsheet, a backsheet joined to the topsheet, an absorbent core positioned between the topsheet and the backsheet, and a pair of barrier leg cuffs having a proximal edge and a distal edge and being positioned adjacent to the longitudinal edges of the containment assembly;
- (b) a pair of rear ear panels extending laterally outwardly from the proximal edges of the barrier leg cuff in the rear waist region;
- (c) a pair of front ear panels extending laterally outwardly from the proximal edges of the barrier leg cuff in the front waist region; and
- (d) a reinforcement nonwoven joined immediately adjacent to an inner-facing surface of the backsheet and to at least one of either the rear ear panels or the front ear panel so as to form a portion of the garment surface of the absorbent article, the reinforcement nonwoven not substantially overlapping the containment assembly

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3. (Amended) The absorbent article of claim 1 wherein the rear ear panels comprise extensions of the barrier leg cuff in the rear waist region.

- 4. The article of claim 3 wherein the front ear panels comprise extensions of the barrier leg cuff in the front waist region.
- 5. The absorbent article of claim 4 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven is joined to both the rear ear panels and the front ear panels.
- 6. The absorbent article of claim 5 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven further comprises a strip which is joined to the longitudinal edges of the containment assembly in the crotch region.
- 7. The absorbent article of claim 6 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven and the strip are a continuous piece of material.

8. The absorbent article of claim 7 wherein the reinforcement nonwoven has a proximal edge, the proximal edge of the reinforcement nonwoven being joined to the barrier leg cuff between the backsheet and the barrier leg cuff.
9. The absorbent article of claim 8 wherein the strip has a distal edge that extends more distally outward from the longitudinal centerline than the proximal edge of the barrier leg cuff.
10. The absorbent article of claim 9 wherein both of the barrier leg cuff and the reinforcement nonwoven comprise a hydrophobic nonwoven material.